



17 October 2005



USAREUR Suffers Two More Motorcycle Crashes and Another Death

1. The motorcycle carnage continues. Two of our Soldiers were involved in horrific motorcycle crashes this past Saturday:

- A staff sergeant from the 1st Armored Division was killed when he attempted to pass a vehicle on a two-lane road and struck an oncoming vehicle head-on. The Soldier was thrown from his motorcycle and landed on the roadway about 200 meters from the point of impact. He was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident. The picture to the right, which shows the vehicle he struck, shows the force of the impact.



- A chief warrant officer from the 1st Infantry Division was seriously injured when he lost control of his motorcycle on a curve and went off the road into a ditch. Although the Soldier was wearing a helmet and proper personal protective equipment, he suffered life-threatening injuries to his spinal column and damage to the main arteries to his heart. Excessive speed is believed to be the primary cause of the accident. The picture to the right shows what is left of his bike.



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2. In the past 5 months alone, five USAREUR Soldiers have died in motorcycle crashes. Several other Soldiers and civilians have been seriously injured. All these tragedies involved senior personnel who we count on to make good, prudent decisions. These are the same personnel I expect to set an example for our younger Soldiers.

3. To date, I have issued eight Bell Sends messages as a result of fatal motorcycle accidents. The seriousness of this issue, however, requires that I reemphasize some of the guidance that I provided in Bell Sends #24-05:

- **Leaders:** It is apparent to me that we have motorcyclists who do not understand (or care about) the risks involved with their chosen mode of transportation. It is your responsibility and duty to counsel and mentor these Soldiers. If you own a motorcycle, lead by example and mentor others who ride. Identify your motorcycle riders. Ensure that they know how to practice composite risk management and make good risk decisions. Make sure that they know high-risk behavior regarding motorcycle operations. Those who demonstrate high-risk behavior—and you know who they are—require your direct intervention. Use your authority to suspend the licenses of those who show a lack of good judgment when it comes to riding a motorcycle. Those who disregard the standards of safe and prudent motorcycle operation should not be allowed on the road. Practice "Under the Oak Tree Counseling" with every motorcycle operator before every weekend.

- **Motorcyclists:** The authorization to operate a motorcycle in Europe is a privilege, not a right. Your authorization to ride a motorcycle depends on your willingness to ride responsibly and safely. This means riding within your ability, observing speed limits, using proper safety equipment, not attempting high-risk maneuvers, and not drinking and riding. Riding a motorcycle is inherently more dangerous than driving an automobile. Do not increase that risk by riding irresponsibly. Show true care for your fellow motorcyclists and *don't walk by* when you see one of them riding dangerously.

4. Our people are our most precious asset. We cannot afford to lose anyone—Soldier, civilian, or family member—through reckless behavior or preventable accidents. We need each and every member of our team fully mission-capable to ensure that we are always ready to execute with excellence Any Mission, Anywhere.



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General, US Army
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